



# THE ISLAMIC BULLETIN

Issue 7

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## RAMADAN MUBARAK!!! HAPPY RAMADAN!!!

Assalamu alaikum!  
Dear Readers,

The month of Ramadan has once again begun. This month is a very special time in a Muslim's heart and soul. It is a time that The Almighty has bestowed many blessings in our lives. It is also a time for forgiveness, repentance, and an opportunity to earn countless rewards.

It is very important to increase one's worship during Ramadan by reading Quran, praying 'extra' prayers--such as Tahajjud and Taraweeh, and being kind and doing good deeds. These good habits during Ramadan should also, God-willing, continue after the month of fasting has ended.

Fasting develops self-control and helps us to overcome selfishness, greed, laziness and other faults. It is an annual training program to refresh us for carrying out our duties towards the Almighty, the Creator and Sustainer.

Fasting gives us the feeling of hunger and thirst. We experience for ourselves what it is like to have an empty stomach. This develops our feeling for the poor and hungry people. Fasting teaches us to control the love of comfort. Also, it helps us to keep our sexual desires within control. Hunger, comfort, and sex are three factors which must be kept under control to behave as the Almighty's servants.

The purpose of fasting is to make a Muslim able to control his passions, so that he becomes a person of good deeds and intentions. Anger, a common human weakness, can also be brought under control by fasting. A Muslim is expected to keep away from all bad actions during his fast. He should not lie, break a promise or do any deceitful act.

During the month of Ramadan one should visit and offer prayers more frequently in the local Masjids. This is a time when Muslims must come together and show their strength in numbers in supporting their Masjids and Islamic centers. Ramadan is also a time for visiting our friends and families and sharing our meals with the less fortunate.

## RAMADAN MUBARAK!!! HAPPY RAMADAN!!!

**- from all of us at the Islamic Bulletin and the Islamic Center of San Francisco. At this time we would also like to wish every one of our Readers an Eid Mubarak.**

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:

### TRIP TO BRAZIL

Five brothers and I had the chance, with the mercy of God, to visit the Muslim community in Brazil.

There are about 4-6 million Muslims living in Brazil consisting mostly of descendants from Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

To give a brief history of the migration movement of Muslims in Brazil, it started around the year 1880, when the occupation and economical hardship was due on Muslims in Great Syria.

Immigration was at its peak in the 1950's when the economy of Brazil was at its best.

Today, there are first, second, third, and even fourth generation of Muslims living there.

The good news, thanks to God, is that Islam and Muslims are well and sound. There are hundreds of well built mosques everywhere and thousands of good practicing Muslims.

There are also Islamic schools and community centers. This is all due to the mercy of God and the effort which was put by hundreds of Dawa jamat who spent their times there teaching Islam since the 1950's.

When we arrived at Sao Pablo Airport, we had no names, addresses, or phone numbers of Muslims to contact. The leader of our group suggested that we look through the phone book for Muslim "sounding" names and give them a call.

To our surprise, the second person we called was the Amir (leader) of the entire Islamic Centers in Brazil.

46 people accepted Islam while we were in Brazil. Among them was a general in the army, a state person, 7 engineers, a rock singer, a drummer and even a preacher.

I met the preacher in the street while he was preaching Christianity.

He would not allow me to leave until I explained Islam to him.

This preacher became very interested in Islam and accompanied me to the Masjid.

He then declared his Shahadah and proceeded to trade in his Holy Bible, full of 12 years worth of notes, for a Glorious Quran in Portuguese.

### JAMAAT TO BRAZIL

- by Mohammed Asan Khan, Daly City

**"As for those who strive for Us, We surely guide them to Our paths, and Lo! God is with the good".**

**(Quran 29:69)**

For this "call" the Muslims are required to spare their time for traveling in groups, from house to house, street to street, village to village, town to town, and country to country extorting the people to lead their life according to the Principles mentioned above.

No amount of opposition, threat, or persecution should defer them from carrying out this job which has, in fact, been the life mission of all the prophets in general and that of Muhammad (pbuh) in particular.

Thanks to God, a Jamaat from San Francisco left on November 10, 1991 to Brazil to fulfill the commandment of Allah, Subhana Wa Tala and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him).

The Jamaat stayed in two major cities, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

Having worked in so many Masjids and meeting Muslim brothers from different countries, mainly the Middle East (as the majority of the population is from the Middle East) many brothers made intention to go to Pakistan for 4 months and others made their intentions for 40 days.

Since the Jamaat (Group) from other countries are also visiting this country (Brazil) the work of Dawa (invitation to Islam) has started and lot of changes are taking place.

Still much effort is needed.

46 people embraced Islam. On our way back to San Francisco, Jamaats from New York, Portugal, and South Africa were in the neighboring cities of Brazil.

#### NEED TO CONTACT US?

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## RUINS OF LOST CITY UNCOVERED IN ARABIAN DESERT

Guided by ancient maps and sharp-eyed surveys from space, archaeologists and explorers have discovered a lost city deep in the sands of Arabia, and they are virtually sure it is Ubar, the fabled center of the rich frankincense trade thousands of years ago.

Leaders of the expedition reported that excavations so far have uncovered the ruins of eight towers and adjoining walls and deposits of pottery dating to Roman times and as far back as 2000 B.C., perhaps earlier. They said the location and size of the site and evidence of a violent destruction appeared to match historical accounts of Ubar's rise and fall.

Ubar was called the "the Atlantis of the sands" by T.E. Lawrence--Lawrence of Arabia--who had planned to look for the site. The ruins are on the edge of the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Peninsula in the Dhofar region of Southern Oman.

Much research has tied Ubar to the city Iram in the Quran and to Omanum Emporium on the maps of Claudius Ptolemy, the Alexandrian geographer of the second century A.D. He referred to the people of the region as Ubarites.

But it was not until scientists began painstaking analysis of satellite images that they spotted geological traces that led them to the site. Images made with invisible, near-infrared light showed evidence of ancient caravan routes, undetectable on the ground, leading to and from one particular area.

In the Quran, the city of Iram, possibly Ubar, is described as the "many columned city...whose like has not been built in the entire land."

Condemned for their sinful and unrepentant lives, the Quran relates, the people in Iram were destroyed by God. The expedition found evidence of its cause.

The site's buildings were built over a large limestone cavern, which at some point in the distant past collapsed, plunging much of the city into a gaping hole. The ruins were eventually buried in drifting sand.

(See also San Francisco Chronicle, Feb.5, 1992)

## Editor's Comments

The archaeologists and explorers had no books or other source of information to refer to except that of the Holy Quran. Passages from the Holy Quran were even being quoted on the nightly news and the major talk shows.

It should come as no surprise to us Muslims that the accuracy of the Quran has once again been proved to be true. We Muslims should not be surprised of the passages in the Quran and their truthfulness.

Muslims should also beware and take notice of how God creates and also destroys. The people of Ad had disobeyed God and as a result, God punished them by destroying an entire city. Do we think that because we live in such modern times that we are immune to such punishment?

Remember the earthquake in October 1989? This was just a small reminder of how powerless man really is. If we had been destroyed, were we prepared to meet our Creator? What good were our money, wealth, and power at such a time?

Only our good deeds will be of value in such a time. Let us all repent to The Almighty in this blessed month of Ramadan from this moment.

For more about the people of Ad, please click [here](#) and refer also to the Quran 7:65-72; 11:50-60; 25:38; 26:123-140; 29:38; 41:15-16; 46:21-26; 51:41-42; 54:18-21; 69:4-8; 89:6-14.

## MUSLIM INMATES OBSERVE RAMADAN

San Francisco: Thanks to God and to the kind assistance of a reverend, for the first time the 23 inmates at the S.F. County jail will be allowed to gather in one room for the entire Ramadan. They will be able to have their meals before Sunrise and at Sunset. Dates will be provided for the break of fast.

## BIRTH OF THE KOSHER STEEL INDUSTRY

Shocked to discover that most tin cans contain traces of animal fat; an improbable coalition of Jews, Muslims and Seventh-day Adventists has persuaded major steel-makers to start manufacturing kosher steel.

The U.S. Steel-POSCO joint venture in Pittsburgh recently became one of the first steel factories in the country to qualify for kosher certification. Steel made in the plant for use in food and beverage cans and steel drums now is guaranteed to meet strict Jewish kosher, Muslim halal-haram and Seventh-day Adventist requirements.

Religious dietary laws, which date from biblical times, regulate what foods observant Jews, Muslims and Seventh-day Adventists may eat or drink. Muslims and Jews may not consume pork or any animal products that come from meat not slaughtered in accordance with religious ritual. 7th-day Adventists do not eat meat.

The idea that food laws could affect steel sales seemed far-fetched until someone discovered that steel used to make cans routinely is coated during processing with lubricants containing animal fats. Analysis showed that even after cleaning, steel retained some of the lubricating oil.

(See also San Francisco Chronicle, Feb.14, 1992)

### SIYAM (FASTING)

In Arabic, fasting means abstinence from doing something. According to religious scholars, it is an abstinence from food, drink, and sexual intercourse, carried out from dawn till sunset, or the purpose of gaining God's Content. The principles of fasting are set in the Quran as follows:

**"O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you, that you may (learn) self-restraint.**

**(Fasting) for a fixed number of days; but if any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed number (should be made up) from days later. For those who can do it, (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent. But he that will give more, of his own free will—it is better for him. And it is better for you that ye fast, if ye only knew.**

**Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down The Qur'an as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). So every one of you who is present (at his home) during that month should spend it in fasting, but if any one is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) by days later. God intends every facility for you; He does not want to put you to difficulties. (He wants you) to complete the prescribed period, and to glorify Him in that He has guided you; and perchance ye shall be grateful." (Qur'an 2:183-185)**

In "O ye who believe! Fasting is prescribed to you as it was prescribed to those before you," God explains that fasting is not new among the Holy Laws; it was ordained to previous peoples as well. This doubtlessly soothes the heart, facilitates the acceptance of fasting, and sweeps away the feeling of vexation, because Muslims are not the only people requested to fast.

After this, God adds "that ye may (learn) self-restraint," and this is the purpose of fasting. People are commanded to adopt fasting as a means to protect themselves against wicked and evil motives. Fasting safeguards the person as an individual, and the society as a whole. It protects the person from turning into a beast living according to the Law of the Jungle; it also protects society by preparing the devout individual to work for the general welfare, thus living as a human being with other human beings, not as a wild beast with other human beings. To this effect, the Prophet (pbuh) confirms, **"Fasting is a shelter. When one of you is fasting, let him not behave in an obscene or foolish manner. If someone intends to fight against him or scold him, let him just say: I am fasting! I am fasting!"**

Fasting is a shelter in the sense that the faster knows his fasting is carried out in order to avoid the evil of his "animal" nature. When he proclaims, "I am fasting!" he is fully aware that he says it under the effect of his human, not animal, nature. When he safeguards himself against the evils of his animal nature, and his society against his own evil, he gains God's Content, and thus takes his stand among the righteous.

Fasting above all is an act of obedience and submission to the Almighty. This submission and commitment is based upon the love of the Almighty and the earnest effort to gain His pleasure and to avoid His displeasure.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) says that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: The Almighty and Master of Honor says: All other actions of a person are for himself, except the case of his fasting which is exclusively for Me and I shall pay (recompense) for him for the same. The fast is a shield (against vice and the fire of Hell). Therefore when anyone of you is fasting he should abstain from loose talk and avoid verbosity and noisy exchange of words. If somebody starts abusing him or picks up a quarrel with him, he should tell him that 'I am observing a fast.' By the Almighty in whose hands is the life of Muhammad (S.A.W.), the breath of the mouth of one-who is fasting is more pleasant in the sight of The Almighty than the fragrance of musk. A fasting person gets two kinds of pleasure: firstly he feels pleasure when he breaks his fast, and secondly he will be joyful by virtue of his fast, when he meets his Lord. (Bukhari and Muslim)

Another version of Bukhari adds: The Almighty says: The fasting person abstains from food, drink and from satisfying his passion simply for My sake; as such a fast is undertaken for My sake, I shall grant him the recompense for this. Other virtuous deeds (done in the month of Ramadan) are rewarded ten times.

Imam Muslim's version says: A man's good acts are recompensed many times, from ten times to seven hundred times. God The exalted says: But a fast is an exception because it is undertaken simply for My sake, (i.e. there is no limit for its recompenses.) I Alone shall bestow the reward for it. (The person who observes a fast), gives up his food, drink and sensual desires for my sake. For a fasting person there are two pleasures -firstly a joy when he breaks his fast and secondly another joy when he meets his Lord. His breath is more pleasant in the sight of God than the fragrance of musk.

**"That ye may,"** here, bears the sense of preparation and readiness. The way fasting prepares the spirits of fasters for the devotion of God, is manifested in many aspects. As a personal affair, fasting is left to the conviction of the faster himself, with none assuming the role of guardian over him except God. When the faster obeys God's Commandments by rejecting the appeals of his desires that come to his mind during fasting, or when he trains himself to be patient every time he is tempted by delights and desires, out of feeling that God watches him and knows all the secrets of his heart- when he keeps on this for a full month (Ramadan), out of his continuous heed accompanying his activities he certainly will attain the gift of God's Watch over him, as well as his own fear of The Almighty. He will try to avoid the shameful situation of God's finding him where he is prohibited to be. God's Watch over him enables him to carry out all deeds of goodness, and keeps him away from evil. He then would not cheat, ill-treat, or do injustice to others; nor would he spread corruption among people.

However, the mere abstinence from food and drink is not the real meaning of fasting that God enjoined on the righteous. The Holy Prophet (pbuh) declares: "God does not accept the fasting of those who do not restrain themselves from telling falsehood or from doing false deeds." The basic truth of fasting in Islam springs from God's Watch over the faster, as well as the latter's carrying out of his fast for the cause of none but God. To this effect, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) explains: **"God will forgive all the sins of those who fast during Ramadan out of true belief and in anticipation of God's Reward in the Hereafter."**

In the same way, fasting prepares the spirits of falters for the devotion of God, in the sense that fasting moderates the violence of their instinctive desires, the source of all sins. Along this vein, the Holy Prophet (pbuh) declares: **"O ye young people! Those of you who can afford marriage, let them marry, for it confines eyes to modesty and protects the wombs (of women) from evil intentions. Those of you who cannot do this, let them fast because fasting breaks off their lusts."**

Fasting also promotes the Islamic form of sociability. Muslims are urged to invite others to break the fast with them at sunset, to gather for the Qur'anic study, prayer and visitations. This provides spiritual atmosphere - a better chance for socialization in a brotherly and spiritual atmosphere.

Hazrat Zaid bin Khalid al-Juhani (R.A.A.) related that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: Anybody who offers meal for the breaking of the fast of another person earns the same merit as the one who was observing the fast without diminishing in any way the recompense of the fasting person. (Tirmizi and said this is sound and good).

Hazrat Umm Ammarah Al Ansaria (R.A.A.) relates that once the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) visited her when she placed some food before him. He (S.A.W.) asked her to eat also. Thereupon she said "I am fasting today." This He (S.A.W.) remarked when non fasting persons eat before a fasting person the angels call for God's mercies upon him till they have finished or he said, till they have eaten to their satisfaction. (Tirmizi reported this and said it good).

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) relates that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: When any of you is asked to join in a meal, he should accept the invitation. And if he is fasting, he should pray for the host, and if he is not fasting he should joint the host. (Muslim)

## VIRTUES AND BENEFITS OF FASTING

On both the individual and social levels, fasting has many virtues and benefits. Of these we can mention the feeling of sympathy for the poor. After all, man's sense of compassion springs from his feeling of pain, and fasting is a practical means to develop compassion in his spirit. When rich people establish such a feeling for the hungry poor, their inner humane principles attain an effective authority. In this regard, it is reported that Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) was the most generous among people, and he was especially generous during Ramadan.

Moreover, fasting establishes equality among the rich and the poor. In a way, it is a compulsory experience of poverty in that it is meant to make all people share an equality, not diversity, of feeling and to sympathize with one another through a collective sense of pain, not through a discord or diversity of desires.

Among the other virtues of fasting is that it moderates the power of habits. With some people, the dictates of habit have reached the extreme of enslavement. If a meal is served late when they are hungry, they lose their temper. The effects of stimulants like coffee, tea or smoking are even stronger on their addicts than those of food. Such people are slaves to their habits. In fasting there is a sharpening of one's will-power.

Based upon the Qur'an, it has been the consensus of Muslims throughout history that a Muslim who rejects the legitimacy of Siyam rejects Islam as well. The Holy Prophet is reported to have said about the significance of the month of Ramadan:

**"A great month, a blessed month, containing a night which is better than a thousand months. The Almighty has appointed the observance of fasting during it as an obligatory duty, and the passing of its nights in prayer as voluntary practice. If someone draws near to The Almighty during it with some good act, he will be like one who fulfills an obligatory duty in another month, and he who fulfills an obligatory duty in it will be like one who fulfills seventy obligatory duties in another month."**

A quote from another Hadith states: **"The month of Ramadan is the month of endurance and the reward for endurance is paradise. It is a month whose beginning is mercy, whose middle is forgiveness and whose end is freedom from hell."**

## FASTING IS NOT A HARDSHIP

Some people may happen to be ill during the month of Ramadan, or just may be on a tiring journey. In this case, God's Wisdom necessitates that the severity of fasting be mitigated for these people, and to this effect, God instructs:

**"If any of you is ill, or on a journey, the prescribed period (should be made up) from days later." (Quran 2: 184)**

These people may make up for the days on which they break their fast, outside Ramadan when they can afford it. A traveler is allowed to break his fast when he makes a moderate march of a day and a night, which covers around eighty-six kilometers and a half.

In this regard, Abdullah Yusuf Ali comments by saying: "Illness and journey must not be interpreted in an elastic sense: they must be such as to cause real pain or suffering if the fast were observed. For journey, some Commentators make it precise by naming a distance of 16 farsakhs, equivalent to 48 miles. A journey of eight or nine miles on foot is more tiring than a similar one by hullock cart. There are various degrees of fatigue in riding a given distance on horseback or by camel or in a comfortable train or by car or by steamer, aeroplane, or airship. In my opinion, the standard must depend on the means of transportation and on the relative resources of the traveler. It is better to determine it in each case according to circumstances."

Then we have God's word: **"For those who can do it (with hardship), is a ransom, the feeding of one that is indigent."** Such ability with hardships means reaching the utmost a person can stand, and Arabs make this statement only when a person is too weak to do something, so that he suffers a lot in doing it. The people meant in this verse are aged people, ill persons, women suckling their babes, women expecting childbirth, or those whose illness is terminal. Such people may break their fast, and, for every day they break their fast, offer food for a poor person enough to feed a middle-aged man; and thus escape damnation.

God then adds, **"But he that will give more, of his own free will"** - by increasing the prescribed ransom, feeding more than just one poor person for every day he breaks fast, or combining another fast with the prescribed ransom - **"it is better for him"**; the benefit and good credit of such a deed will be his, after all.

Ramadan is the (month) in which was sent down the Qur'an, as a guide to mankind, also clear (Signs) for guidance and judgment (between right and wrong). This part of the verse specifies the period of fasting required of Muslims, the days of Ramadan. The wisdom underlying the choice of this month for this kind of worship, is its being the month in which The Qur'an was revealed.

Fasting has also many Psychological benefits. It enhances the feeling of inner peace, contentment, and optimism. These feelings result from the realization of The Almighty's pleasure.

Fasting teaches patience and perseverance and enhances the feeling for moral accomplishment.

Hazrat Abu Hurairah (R.A.A.) related that the Holy Prophet (S.A.W.) said: **If a person does not refrain from lying and indecent activities, The Almighty, does not want that he should abstain from eating and drinking. (Bukhari)**

Note: The idea behind this tradition is that backbiting, lying and indecent activities while fasting lessen the recompense of the fast and decrease its radiance. Therefore one should shun these things while fasting. Voluntary deprivation of the lawful appetite leads one to appreciate the bounties of The Almighty which are usually taken for granted (until they are missed!)

For a complete month every year, Muslims go through a different and exciting experience which breaks the normal routine of life. Not only can this be refreshing, it also teaches the person to adapt to varying conditions and circumstances.

## RAMADAN

Develop special interest for prayers during the month of Ramadan.

## LAILA-TUL-QADR (NIGHT OF GLORY)

Arrange to offer as many Nafls (optional prayers) as possible during the Laila-tul-Qadr, and recite the Holy Qur'an as the importance of this night lies in the fact that it was on this very night that the Divine message descended. The Holy Qur'an in Surah Al-Qadr (The Night of Power) says:

**"We have indeed revealed this (Message) In the Night of Power. And what do you know (about the significance and importance) of this night? The Glorious Night is better than a thousand months. On this night the angels and Hadrat Jibrail (Gabriel) descended (embark upon their allotted mission) by the command of their Sustainer. That (Night) is all peace until the dawn." (Qur'an 97:1-5)**

## I'TIKAF IN RAMADAN

The tradition has it that the Holy Prophet (saw) observed I'tikaf (i.e. prayers in seclusion) during Ramadan, and therefore, we should follow the same practice. According to Hadrat Ayesha (ra), "When the last ten days of Ramadan arrived, the Holy Prophet (saw) used to awake as much as possible and offer prayers. He also made arrangements to wake up his wives and prayed with all devotion to The Almighty."

## ZAKAT AL-FITR

Should be given on behalf of adult, minor, male or female Muslims. It consists of a sa'a (measure of about 2.5. Kgs) of rice, wheat, dates or similar things of food or its equivalence in cash of \$3 dollars and 50 cents or \$4 dollars. Give it voluntarily and without any hesitation, on Eid-day, or a day or two before to enable the needy and the poor to arrange for their requirements so that they may celebrate and enjoy the Eid festivities along with the others. The Holy Prophet (saw) has highly recommended the Zakat al-Fitr so that it may expiate for the irregularities committed during Ramadan, and may help for the sustenance of the poor and the indigent. (Abu Daud)

### DATES - Rich in Proteins & Vitamins

Muslims generally break their fast by eating dates. Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) is reported to have said, "**If anyone of you is fasting, let him break his fast with dates. In case he does not have them, then with water. Verily water is a purifier.**"

The Prophet used to break his fast by eating some dates before offering Maghrib prayer, and if ripe dates were not available, he used to substitute them with some dried grapes. When these too were not available, he used to have a few sips of water, according to some reports.

Modern science has proved that dates are a part of a healthy diet. They contain sugar, fat, and proteins, as well as important vitamins. Hence the great importance attached to them by the Prophet.

Dates are also rich in natural fibers. Modern medicine has shown that they are effective in preventing abdominal cancer. They also surpass other fruits in the sheer variety of their constituents. They contain oil, calcium, sulphur, iron, potassium, phosphorus, manganese, copper, and magnesium. In other words, one date is a minimum of a balanced and healthy diet.

Arabs usually combine dates with milk and yogurt or bread, butter and fish. This combination indeed makes a self-sufficient and tasty diet for both mind and body.

Dates and date palms have been mentioned in the Holy Quran 20 times, thus showing their importance. The Prophet likened a good Muslim to the date palm saying, "**Among trees, there is a tree like a Muslim. Its leaves do not fall.**"

Sayyidah Mariam (the Virgin Mary) had dates as her food when she felt labor pains and during confinement. They are definitely the "Crown of sweets," and ideal food which is easy to digest, and within half an hour of taking it, the tired body regains a new vigor. The reason for this is that a shortage of sugar in the blood is the main factor that makes people hungry and not an empty stomach as is often assumed.

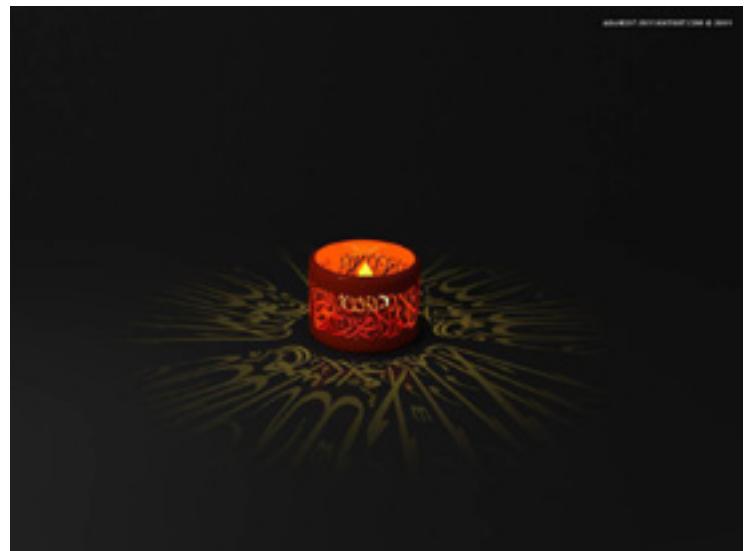
When the body absorbs the nutritional essence of a few dates, the feeling of hunger becomes appeased. When one breaking the fast with dates takes some other food afterwards, he cannot eat much. It would seem that breaking the fast with dates then helps one avoid excessive eating.

Experiments have also shown that dates contain some stimulants which strengthen the muscles of the uterus in the last months of pregnancy. This helps the dilation of the uterus at the time of delivery on one hand and reduces the bleeding after the delivery on the other.

Dieticians consider dates as the best food for women in confinement and those who are breast-feeding. This is because dates contain elements which assist in alleviating depression in mothers and enriching the breast-milk with all the elements needed to make the child healthy and resistant to disease.

The Prophet has emphasized the importance of dates and their effectiveness in the growth of the fetus. He has also recommended they be given to women.

*The Islamic Bulletin*



Modern dietary institutes now recommend dates to be given to children suffering from a nervous nature or hyperactivity.

The Prophet has also recommended dates as a medicine for heart troubles, according to some reports. Modern science has also proved the effectiveness of dates, in preventing diseases of the respiratory system.

Ayisha (R.A.), used to prescribe dates for those suffering from giddiness.

It is now well-known that a fall in the level of the sugar in the blood and low blood pressure are among the causes of giddiness. She was also reported to have used dates combined with cucumber to treat her over-slim condition. She said "they've tried to fatten me giving me everything. But I did not become fat. Then they fattened me with cucumbers and ripe dates and I gained."

Ayisha was quite correct. As we now know that one kilogram of dates contains nearly 3,000 calories which alone are sufficient to supply the minimum daily requirements of an active man for one full day.

Dates are rich in several vitamins and minerals. When the level of trace elements falls in the body, the health of the blood vessels is affected leading to an increased heart-rate and a consequent inability to perform its function with normal efficiency.

As dates are also rich in calcium, they help strengthen the bones. When the calcium content in the body decreases, children are affected with rickets and the bones of adults become brittle and weak.

Dates are also important in keeping up the health of the eyes. It is quite effective in guarding against night-blindness. In the early years of Islam, dates were served as food for Muslim warriors. They used to carry them in special bags hung at their sides. They are the best stimulant for muscles and so the best food for a warrior about to engage in battle.

The Prophet used to combine dates with bread sometimes. At other times he mixed ripe dates with cucumbers, or dates combined with ghee. He used to take all varieties of dates, but he preferred the variety called ajwah.

In the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah and the Holy Haram in Makkah, large quantities of dates are supplied by generous people on all days of Ramadan.

## THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD

The miracle of the virgin conception of Mary, as depicted in the Quran, is a clear example of God's absolute power and His domination over the happenings of the universe. The immense significance of this miracle is that it involved a physiological phenomenon taking place which could not have occurred under the normal working of the laws of nature. By discarding the natural process whereby male and female unite to produce an offspring God demonstrated His absolute power and domination. This was to convince mankind that creation need not necessarily follow the rules of cause and effect or be subjected to it. For God has the capacity to ordain a thing to be and produce effects without prerequisite engendering causes.

Here, God is involved with four different processes of creation to demonstrate that the reproduction and perpetuation of the human species can be fulfilled without the necessity of physical contact between male and female or their participation, if He so ordains. These four processes are namely:

- the creation of Adam from dust;
- the creation of Eve from Adam (or female from male);
- the creation of mankind through the union of male and female;
- the birth of Jesus from a female without being touched by a male.

Thus has God accomplished the four kinds of creation of the human race.

Although birth and reproduction have been ordained to occur in accordance with the union between male and female, the fruitfulness of any such union rests with God's will and providence. About this divine will, the Quran says:

**"Unto God belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. He creates what He will. He bestows female (offspring) upon whom He will, and bestows male (offspring) upon whom He will. Or He mingles them, males and females, and He makes barren whom He will..." (Qur'an Al-Shura 42:49-50)**

God tells believers not to succumb to despair or confusion if they fail to account for causes and effects, because ultimately it is He alone that determines all causes and their effects as He wills, regardless of laws or norms. With this knowledge at hand, the believer is better prepared to confront the upheavals of daily life with greater confidence in God's providence and omniscience. This faith rekindles his heart and soul with renewed hope. The thought of unaccountable happenings occurring is no longer disturbing or frightening. Once this faith takes root in the believer's heart, the true believer firmly holds the conviction that God is capable of ordaining happenings and events in isolation of their due causes. This unwarranted despair is referred to in the Surah of the Family of Imran (Al 'Imran), wherein God says:

**"(Remember) when the wife of 'Imran said: My Lord! I have vowed unto You that which is in my womb as a consecrated (offering). Accept it from me. Lo! (You, only You) are the Hearer of the Knower. And when she was delivered she said, My Lord! I am delivered of a female..." (Qur'an Al 'Imran 3:35-6)**

The sentence "I am delivered of a female", spoken by Imran's wife, indicating her disappointment that the child born was not a male, illustrates the kind of despair which we are cautioned not to let infiltrate our faith in God and His wisdom. Imran's wife had pledged to offer her unborn child to the service of God and had, therefore, felt certain that He would give her a son who, in her reckoning, would be better able to serve Him. This was an unfounded belief to which God replies: **"(God knew best of what she was delivered). The male is not as the female." (Qur'an Al 'Imran 3:36)**

In this verse, God again cautions us not to judge His decrees and plans in terms of our imperfect knowledge and logic. In all divine acts is a pur-

pose that might not be obvious at the time of their actual manifestation. This verse also corrects the misconception that males are superior to females in the service of God or in fulfilling His purpose. Hence came the reminder that 'The male is not as the female.' In other words, the daughter Imran's wife had given birth to was much more worthy than any son she could have wished for. God alone knew what the great significance of the birth of this female child to mankind would be.

In preparing Mary for her predestined role, God planned that she should be offered by her mother to His service in the temple. Her spiritual education began by being instilled with faith in God's power to make things happen independent of their natural causes. She was given evidence of this when He provided her with food that was unlike any found on earth and with fruit out of season. Despite many divine signs, however, Mary continued to doubt the possibility of a miracle conception, asking Gabriel, who had come to announce to her God's will:

**"How can I have a son when no mortal has touched me, neither have I been unchaste?" (Qur'an Maryam 19:20)**

To reinforce her faith and reassure her of His almighty power, God said to her through Gabriel:

**"So (it will be). Your Lord says: It is easy for Me. And (it will be) that We may make of him a revelation for mankind and a mercy from Us." (Qur'an Maryam 19:21)**

What God was saying to Mary was "Do you wonder at what is happening to you after all that you have seen of My limitless power?"

Another Verse (3:49) tells us that Jesus was given the power to "heal him who was born blind, and the leper, and raise the dead by God's leave". In other words, the true healer was God Himself. He was, likewise, the One who gave life and took it. On the other hand, we have the second class of miracles which Jesus could perform spontaneously, using the divine powers already vested in him. Unlike the former class, God revealed to him the secrets of these (latter) miracles and gave him access to His knowledge regarding them. Thus, although he was given the power to revive the dead, neither he nor any other Prophet was given the secret of life and death.

Despite the miracles that demonstrated the power of the Absolute and the support it gave Jesus from the moment he was born until his death, the Israelites rejected his message and refused to believe in his God. They seemed to alienate themselves further from God and began to plot against him and cast doubt about his message, exactly as they had previously done to Moses. Even when they seemed to have rid themselves of the attraction of the material world, their faith did not last long and they always regressed to their old ways and the worship of matter, as is stated in the following verse:

**"But when Jesus became conscious of their disbelief, he cried: Who will be helpers in the cause of God? The disciples said: We will be God's helpers. We believe in God, and bear witness that we have surrendered (unto Him) [are Muslims]." (Qur'an Al 'Imran 3:52)**

Thus Jesus began to look for true believers and supporters when he discovered that all the miracles and evidence he brought the Israelites could not weaken their deeply-rooted corruption and love for the material world. In seeking disciples to carry on his message after his ascension, Jesus was showing his despair that the Israelites would never see the light of truth, that they would ever cease to fight his religion.

He put all his hope in spreading his message to mankind in his disciples and the few supporters who truly believed in his God, and began to teach them the content and purpose of his divine message. He explained to them the commands and injunctions contained in his message and made them pledge to spread it throughout the whole world.

Indeed the message of Jesus was an embodiment of the limitless power of God's will, which was manifested throughout Jesus' life. It showed itself most vividly when God revealed to Imran's wife that He alone knew best why she should give birth to a girl. The same divine power showed itself in providing Mary with food unlike any other. Finally the immaculate conception and birth of Jesus, his ability to speak and defend his mother when he was but a few days old gave further evidence of the Almighty will of God.

## ASTRONOMY

While Astronomy withered in medieval Europe, it flourished within Islam. Renaissance astronomers learned from the texts of Islamic scholars, who had preserved, developed, and transformed the science of the ancient Greeks.

The era of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) brought about great zeal, enthusiasm and enlightenment among the nomadic Arabs to acquire and spread knowledge which is simply astonishing. The Holy Qur'an gives supreme importance for acquisition of knowledge to probe into the vast expanses of the Universe with the power of reasoning and intellect bestowed on mankind.

**The Holy Qur'an states: "And He has subjected to you, as from Him, all that is in the heavens and on earth: behold, in that are Signs indeed for those who reflect." (Qur'an 45:13)**

The following two centuries, after Hijri was regarded as the golden era in the Islamic sciences. In the words of a great Harvard historian of Science, George Sarton: "From the second half of the eighth to the end of eleventh century, Arabic was the scientific and progressive language of the mankind. When the West was sufficiently mature to feel the need of deeper knowledge, it turned its attention, first of all, not to the Greek sources, but to the Arabic ones."

A historian of the West says that from the 8th to the 14th century, most of the Astronomical activity took place in the Middle East, North Africa, Moorish Spain, while Europe languished in the Dark Ages.

The wealth of knowledge in Astronomy and other sciences preserved and developed by Islamic scholars fell into the hands of Europeans which ultimately paved the way for Renaissance in Europe.

The growth of Islamic Astronomy by leaps and bounds was mainly due to Islamic religious observances which presented a host of problems in mathematical astronomy mostly related to time-keeping. In solving these problems the Islamic scholars went far beyond the Greek mathematical methods.

These developments notably in the field of Trigonometry provided the essential tools for the creation of Western Renaissance Astronomy. The glimpses of Medieval Islamic Astronomy are conspicuous even today. The familiar astronomical terms like Zenith, Azimuth, and the Stars in the Summer Triangle Vega, Altair and Deneb and many more such words are of Arabic origin.

**Mentioned below are some of the most prominent Islamic astronomers.**

**Musa Al-Khawarzmi:** He was among the most important of the early 9th century astronomers. Apart from his notable contribution to mathematics, he also wrote on Astronomy, especially on Ptolemy's "Almagest" (Syntaxis). He prepared a set of "Zij" (astronomical tables) of future planetary and stellar positions, called "Zijal Sindhind", since they were based on some Hindu tables that were brought to Baghdad. These tables are the first of the major Islamic Astronomical works that have survived in its entirety.

**Abu Al-Abbas Al-Farghani:** He wrote a more general book on *The Islamic Bulletin*



Astronomy, a critical commentary on Al-Khawarzmi's "Zij" and a commentary on "Almagest". This was of utmost importance, since it gave in Arabic, a thorough account of Ptolemaic Astronomy in a clear well organized text which enjoyed considerable popularity.

**Abu Abdullah Al-Battani:** Of all the early Arabian astronomers he was the greatest and the most famous was. Al-Battani, a Sabian from Harran, made astronomical observations from Al-Raqqa on the north bank of Euphrates. He made observations of eclipses and other celestial phenomena. His most notable contribution to the field was his "Kitab Al-Zij" (Book of Astronomical Tables). He also constructed several astronomical instruments to make accurate observations and measurements.

**Abdul Wafa Al-Buzjani:** He was another great representative of astronomical and mathematical school that had grown up after the founding of Baghdad. He wrote a complete text book on Astronomy from a mathematical point of view, with explicit solutions.

**Abdul Hussain Al-Sufi:** He was a late 10th century astronomer from Iran, renowned for his observations and descriptions of the stars and his "Book of the Constellation of the Fixed Stars". This book became a classic in Islamic Astronomy and Abul Hussain was recognized in the West as Azophi.

**Abu Rayhan Al-Biruni:** A multifaceted intellectual from Iran also contributed to the field of Astronomy, even though his primary interests were in Astrology. His contributions were in Astronomical Geography, using eclipses to determine the longitude of places on Earth. He also made astronomical observations to determine the distance of a degree of the Meridian.

**Abdul Hassan Ibn Yunus:** He was another great astronomer as the close of the 10th century, from Egypt with major contributions in the area of astronomical determination of the prayer times. His tables were very extensive - they had more than 10,000 entries of the Sun's position throughout the year. These tables were so accurate that they were used in Cairo until the 19th century.

**Ulugh Beg:** He was the grandson of the famous Mongol Conqueror Tamerlane. Ulugh Beg also made astronomical observations and was a dynamic force behind the cultural life of Samarkhand which was abruptly cut off due to his untimely assassination.

The great efforts of the Islamic Astronomers became very handy for the European Renaissance Astronomers to learn and further develop the field of Astronomy.



**Q: 1. What comes before the month of Ramadan? Shaban or Shawwal?**

**Q: 2. During how many years was the Holy Qur'an completely revealed?**

**Q: 3. What is the Zakah of the body?**

**Q: 4. Who was known by the name Al-Amin?**

**Q: 5. Name the birthplace of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)?**

**Q: 6. In which month do we fast?**

**Q: 7. There are some people mentioned in the Qur'an who are eligible to receive Zakah. Name at least four.**

*A: The month that comes before the holy month of Ramadan is called Shaban.*

*A: The Holy Quran was completely revealed in 23 years.*

*A: Fasting is the zakah of the body.*

*A: The Holy Prophet (SAW) was also commonly known as the Al-Amin.*

*A: Mecca is the birthplace of the Holy Prophet (SAW).*

*A: The Muslims fast in the holy month of Ramadan.*

*A: There are 4 categories of people mentioned in the Qur'an who are eligible to receive Zakah: The poor, the needy, the slaves and the debtors.*

## WHY I EMBRACED ISLAM

### Hajj Malik Shabazz (Malcolm X)



"The color-blindness of the Muslim world's religious society and the color-blindness of the Muslim world's human society; these two influences had each day been making a greater impact and an increasing persuasion against my previous way of thinking..."

There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue-eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual. Displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white."

- Hajj Malik (Malcolm X)

### Brief Chronological History

1925, May 19	Born Malcolm Little in Omaha, Nebraska
1940	Drops out of school at age 15
1946	Convicted of burglary and sent to prison
1949-1951	Studies the Nation of Islam
1952	Leaves prison, dedicates himself to building Nation of Islam, changes name to Malcolm X
1963, Dec 4	Suspended from the Nation of Islam
1964, March	Leaves Nation of Islam, starts the Muslim Mosque, Inc.
1964, April 22	Makes his Hajj and becomes Al Hajj Abdul Malik Shabazz
1964, June 28	Forms the Organization of Afro American Unity
1964, July 17	Speaks at the Organization of African Unity in Cairo
1964, Aug. 13	U.S. State and Justice Department take notice of his influence on African Leaders at the U.N.
1965, Feb. 13	Al Hajj Malik's house in Queens, N.Y. bombed
1965, Feb. 21	Al Hajj Abdul Malik Shabazz was assassinated in New York

On May 19, 1925 in Omaha, Nebraska, Malcolm Little was born to Reverend Earl Little and Louise Little. The Rev. Little, who believed in self-determination, worked for the unity of Black people. Malcolm was raised in a background of ethnic awareness and dignity, wherein violence sprang from white racists to stop such Black people, like the Rev. Little, from preaching for the black cause.

When Malcolm was six years old, his father was murdered by white racists. The history of Malcolm's family tree shows that his dedication to Black people, like that of his father, may have been motivated by the total oppression of his family. By the tender age of six, Malcolm, his parents and brothers and sisters, had been shot at, burned out of home, harassed, and threatened, culminating in the death of his father.

Some years later, Malcolm became a "drop-out" from school at the age of 15. Learning the ways of the streets Malcolm came to know the hoodlums, thieves, dope peddlers, and pimps. Convicted of burglary at 20, he was in prison until he was 27 years old and was released in 1952 a changed man. During his prison stay he attempted to educate himself. Just as important, it was at this time of imprisonment that he came into the knowledge of the Black Muslim sect.

Upon learning about the Black Muslims, Malcolm studied the teachings fully. When released from prison he went to Detroit, joined the daily activities of the sect, and was given instructions by Elijah Muhammad himself. Malcolm's personal commitment helped build the organization nationally while making him an international figure. Envy and other problems forced Malcolm to leave the Black sect with intentions of starting his own organization on March 12, 1964.

"I feel like a man who has been asleep somewhat and under someone else's control. I feel what I'm thinking and saying now is for myself. Before, it was for and by guidance of another, now I think with my own mind." - Malcolm X

Malcolm was 38 years old when he left Elijah Muhammad's Nation of Islam. It is then that Malcolm reflects on event that happened prior to leaving. "At one or another college or university, usually in the informal gatherings after I had spoken, perhaps a dozen generally white-complexioned people would come up to me, identifying themselves as Arabian, Middle Eastern or North African Muslims who happened to be visiting, studying or living in the United States. They had said to me that, my white- indicting statements was sincere in considering myself a Muslim--and they felt if I was exposed to what they always called "true Islam," I would "understand it, and embrace it." Automatically, as a follower of Elijah Muhammad, I had bridled whenever this was said. But in the privacy of my own thoughts after several of these experiences, I did question myself: if one was sincere in professing a religion, why should he balk at broadening his knowledge of that religion?

Those orthodox Muslims whom I had met, one after another, had urged me to meet and talk with a Dr. Mahmoud Youssef Shawarbi... Then one day Dr. Shawarbi and I were introduced by a newspaperman. He was cordial. He said he had followed me in the press; I said I had been told of him, and we talked for 15 or 20 minutes. We both had to leave to make appointments we had, when he dropped on me something whose logic never would get out of my head. He said, "No man has believed perfectly until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."

The pilgrimage to Mecca, known as the Hajj, is a religious obligation that every Muslim fulfills, if humanly able, at least once in his or her lifetime. The Holy Quran says it, "Pilgrimage to the Ka'ba is a duty men owe to God; those who are able, make the journey." God said: "And proclaim the pilgrimage among them; they will come to you on foot and upon each lean camel, they will come from every deep ravine."

It was after leaving the Nation of Islam that Malcolm became an Orthodox Muslim, made a holy pilgrimage, traveled through the Mid-East and Africa, and talked with many diplomats and heads of state. The effects it had and his change was clear in his attitude, words, and actions to the degree that many were confused as to what his new program was. The Quran was his guidepost and his

torical as well as personal experience made him the most dynamic leader of the Black Revolution.

Malcolm made the pilgrimage that every Muslim must make at least once in a life time to the holy city of Mecca. It is during this time that Malcolm reflects on his pilgrimage to Mecca. "Every one of the thousands at the airport, about to leave for Jeddah, was dressed this way. You could be a king or a peasant and no one would know. Some powerful personages, who were discreetly pointed out to me, had on the same thing I had on. Once thus dressed, we all had begun intermittently calling out 'Labbayka! (Allahumma) Labbayka!' (Here I come, O Lord!) Packed in the plane were white, black, brown, red, and yellow people, blue eyes and blond hair, and my kinky red hair--all together, brothers! All honoring the same God, all in turn giving equal honor to each other..."

"That is when I first began to reappraise the 'white man'. It was when I first began to perceive that 'white man', as commonly used, means complexion only secondarily; primarily it described attitudes and actions. In America, 'white man' meant specific attitudes and actions toward the black man, and toward all other non-white men. But in the Muslim world, I had seen that men with white complexions were more genuinely brotherly than anyone else had ever been. That morning was the start of a radical alteration in my whole outlook about 'white' men."

"There were tens of thousands of pilgrims, from all over the world. They were of all colors, from blue- eyed blonds to black-skinned Africans. But we were all participating in the same ritual displaying a spirit of unity and brotherhood that my experiences in America had led me to believe never could exist between the white and the non-white."

"America needs to understand Islam, because this is the one religion that erases from its society the race problem. Throughout my travels in the Muslim world, I have met, talked to, and even eaten with people who in America would have been considered white--but the 'white' attitude was removed from their minds by the religion of Islam. I have never before seen sincere and true brotherhood practiced by all colors together, irrespective of their color."

"Each hour here in the Holy Land enables me to have greater spiritual insights into what is happening in America between black and white. The American Negro never can be blamed for his racial animosities--he is only reacting to four hundred years of the conscious racism of the American whites. But as racism leads America up the suicide path, I do believe, from the experiences that I have had with them, that the whites of the younger generation, in the colleges and universities, will see the handwriting on the wall and many of them will turn to the spiritual path of truth--the only way left to America to ward off the disaster that racism inevitably must lead to."

"...I believe that God now is giving the world's so-called 'Christian' white society its last opportunity to repent and atone for the crimes of exploiting and enslaving the world's non-white peoples. It is exactly as when God gave Pharaoh a chance to repent. But Pharaoh persisted in his refusal to give justice to those who he oppressed. And, we know, God finally destroyed Pharaoh."

"I will never forget the dinner at the Azzam home with Dr. Azzam. The more we talked, the more his vast reservoir of knowledge and its variety seemed unlimited. He spoke of the racial lineage of the descendants of Muhammad (PBUH) the Prophet, and he showed how they were both black and white. He also pointed out how color, and the problems of color which exist in the Muslim world, exist only where, and to the extent that, that area of the Muslim world has been influenced by the West. He said that if one encountered any differences based on attitude toward color, this directly reflected the degree of Western influence."

Malcolm also took time to recognize the contribution that his sister, Ella had on his life. "I couldn't get over what she had done. She had played a very significant role in my life. No other woman ever was strong enough to point me in directions; I pointed women in directions. I had brought Ella into Islam, and now she was financing me to Mecca.

It was during his pilgrimage that he began to write some letters to his loyal assistants at the newly formed Muslim Mosque in Harlem. He asked that his letter be duplicated and distributed to the press. "Never have I witnessed such sincere hospitality and the overwhelming spirit of true brotherhood as is practiced by people of all colors and races here in this Ancient Holy Land, the home of Abraham, Muhammad, and all the other Prophets of the Holy Scriptures. For the past week, I have been utterly speechless and spellbound by the graciousness I see displayed all around me by people of all colors..."

"You may be shocked by these words coming from me. But on this pilgrimage, what I have seen, and experienced, has forced me to re-arrange much of my thought-patterns previously held, and to toss aside some of my previous conclusions. This was not too difficult for me. Despite my firm convictions, I have been always a man who tries to face facts, and to accept the reality of life as new experience and new knowledge unfolds it. I have always kept an open mind, which necessary to the flexibility that must go hand in hand with every form of intelligent search for truth."

"During the past eleven days here in the Muslim world, I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass, and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug)--while praying to the same God-with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond, and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan, and Ghana."

"We were truly all the same (brothers)--because their belief in one God had removed the 'white' from their minds, the 'white' from their behavior, and the 'white' from their attitude."

"I could see from this, that perhaps if white Americans could accept the Oneness of God, then perhaps, too, they could accept in reality the Oneness of Man--and cease to measure, and hinder, and harm others in terms of their 'differences' in color."

"With racism plaguing America like an incurable cancer, the so-called 'Christian' white American heart should be more receptive to a proven solution to such a destructive problem. Perhaps it could be in time to save America from imminent disaster-- the same destruction brought upon Germany by racism that eventually destroyed the Germans themselves."

"....They asked me what about the Hajj had impressed me the most...I said, "The Brotherhood! The people of all races, colors, from all over the world coming together as one! It has proved to me the power of the One God." "...All ate as one, and slept as one. Everything about the pilgrimage atmosphere accented the Oneness of Man under One God."

Malcolm returned from the Hajj pilgrimage with new spiritual incite as Hajj Malik Al-Shabazz with the knowledge that the struggle had increased from civil rights of a nationalist, to human rights of an internationalist and a humanitarian. The question had been raised concerning the support of African and Muslim people even in the United Nations on the treatment of minorities in America. Malcolm was Hajj Malik, a true Muslim and a threat to the immoral establishment of America.

Malcolm in becoming Hajj Malik, called America (Black and White) to the true religion of humanity. He saw Islam as the answer to individual and national problems such as racism, and perhaps the only hope for America.

"If I can die having brought any light, having exposed any meaningful truth that will help to destroy the racist cancer that is malignant in the body of America, then all of the credit is due to Allah. Only the mistakes have been mine." -Al Hajj Malik Shabazz

Al Hajj Malik Shabazz was assassinated on February 25, 1965, at a rally. Thanks to God, he performed the Hajj and was guided to the true religion of Islam.



## ASMAA BINT ABU BAKR

Asmaa bint Abu Bakr belonged to a distinguished Muslim family. Her father, Abu Bakr, was a close friend of the Prophet (pbuh) and the first Khalifah after his death. Her half-sister, Aishah, was a wife of the Prophet. Her husband, Zubayr ibn al Awwam, was one of the special personal aides of the Prophet (pbuh). Her son, Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr, became well-known for his incorruptibility and his unwavering devotion to Truth.

Asmaa herself was one of the first persons to accept Islam. Only about 17 persons including both men and women became Muslims before her. She was later given the nickname, Dhat an- Nitaqayn (the One with the Two Waistbands), because of an incident connected with the departure of the Prophet (pbuh) and her father from Mecca on the historic hijrah to Madinah.

Asmaa was one of the few persons who knew of the Prophet's plan to leave for Madinah. The utmost secrecy had to be maintained because of the Quraysh plans to murder the Prophet (SAW). On the night of their departure, she prepared a bag of food and a water container for their journey. She did not find anything though with which to tie the containers and decided to use her waistband. Abu Bakr suggested that she tear it into two. This she did and the Prophet (SAW) commended her action. From then on she became known as "the One with the Two Waistbands".

When the final emigration from Mecca to Madinah took place soon after the departure of the Prophet (pbuh), Asmaa was pregnant. She did not let her pregnancy or the prospect of a long and arduous journey deter her from leaving. As soon as she reached Quba on the outskirts of Madinah, she gave birth to a son, Abdullah. The Muslims shouted in happiness and thanksgiving because this was the first child to be born to the muhajireen in Madinah.

Asmaa became known for her fine and noble qualities and for the keenness of her intelligence. She was an extremely generous person. Her son Abdullah once said of her, "I have not seen two women more generous than my aunt Aishah and my mother Asmaa. But their generosity was expressed in different ways. My aunt would accumulate one thing after another until she had gathered what she felt was sufficient and then distributed it all to those in need. My mother, on the other hand, would not keep anything even for the morrow."

Asmaa's presence of mind in difficult circumstances was remarkable. When her father left Mecca, he took all his wealth, amounting to some 6,000 dirhams, and did not leave any for his family. When Abu Bakr's father, Abu Quuhafah heard of his departure he went to his house and said to her: "I understand that he has left you no money after he has abandoned you." "No, grandfather," replied Asmaa, "in fact he has left us much money." She took some pebbles and put them in a small recess in the wall where they used to put money. She threw a cloth over the heap and took the hand of her grandfather-he was blind-and said, "See how much money he has left us." Through this stratagem, Asmaa wanted to allay the fears of the old man and to forestall him from giving them anything of his own wealth. This was because she disliked receiving any assistance even if it was her own grandfather.

Asmaa had an attitude and was not inclined to compromise her honor and her faith. Her mother, Qutaylah, once came to visit her

in Madinah. She was not a Muslim. Her mother brought her gifts of raisins, clarified butter and qaraz (pods of a species of tree). Asmaa at first refused to admit her into her house or accept the gifts. She sent someone to Aishah to ask the Prophet (pbuh), about her attitude to her mother and he replied that she should certainly admit her to her house and accept the gifts. On this occasion, the following revelation came to the Prophet (pbuh):

**"God forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: For God loves those who are just. God only forbids you with regard to those who fight you for (your) Faith, and drive you out of your homes, and support (others) in driving you out, from turning to them (for friendship and protection). It is such as turn to them (in these circumstances), that do wrong." (Qur'an Al- Mumtahana 60: 8-9)**

For Asmaa and indeed for many other Muslims, life in Madinah was rather difficult at first. Her husband was quite poor and his only major possession to begin with was a horse he had bought. She described these early days: "I used to provide fodder for the horse, give it water and groom it. I would grind grain and make dough but I could not bake well. The women of the Ansar used to bake for me. They were truly good women. I used to carry the grain on my head from az-Zubayr's plot which the Prophet (pbuh) had allocated to him to cultivate. It was about three farsakh (about eight kilometers) from the town's center. One day I was on the road carrying the grain on my head when I met the Prophet (pbuh) and a group of Sahabah. He called out to me and stopped his camel so that I could ride behind him. I felt embarrassed to travel with the Prophet (pbuh) and also remembered Zubayr's jealousy--he was the most jealous of men. The Prophet (pbuh) realized that I was embarrassed and rode on." Later, Asmaa related to Zubayr exactly what had happened and he said, "By God, that you should have to carry grain is far more distressing to me than your riding with (the Prophet)."

Asmaa obviously then was a person of great sensitivity and devotion. She and her husband worked extremely hard together until their situation of poverty gradually changed. At times, however, Zubayr treated her harshly. Once she went to her father and complained to him about this.

His reply to her was: "My daughter, have sabr (patience) for if a woman has a righteous husband and he dies and she does not marry after him, they will be brought together again in Paradise."

Zubayr eventually became one of the richest men among the Sahabah but Asmaa did not allow this to corrupt her principles. Her son, al- Mundhir once sent her an elegant dress from Iraq made of fine and costly material. Asmaa by this time was blind. She felt the material and said, "It's awful. Take it back to him." Al- Mundhir was upset and said, "Mother, it was not transparent." "It may not be transparent", she retorted, "but it is too tight-fitting and shows the contours of the body." Al-Mundhir bought another dress that met with her approval and she accepted it.

If the above incidents and aspects of Asmaa's life may easily be forgotten, then her final meeting with her son, Abdullah, must remain one of the most unforgettable moments in early Muslim history. At that meeting she demonstrated the keenness of her intelligence, her resoluteness, and the strength of her faith.

Abdullah was in the running for the Caliphate after the death of Yazid ibn Mu'awiyah. The Hijaz, Egypt, Iraq, Khurasan and much of Syria were favorable to him and acknowledged him as the Caliph. The Umayyads, however, continued to contest the Caliphate and to field a massive army under the command of Al- Hajjaj. Relentless battles were fought between the two sides during which Abdullah ibn az-Zubayr displayed great acts of courage and heroism.

Many of his supporters however could not withstand the continuous strain of battle and gradually began to desert him. Finally he sought refuge in the Sacred Mosque at Mecca. It was then that he went to his mother, now an old blind woman, and said:

"Peace be on you, Mother, and the mercy and blessings of God." "Unto you be peace, Abdullah," she replied. "What is it that brings you here at this hour while boulders from Hajjaj's catapults are raining down on your soldiers in the Haram and shaking the houses of Mecca?" "I came to seek your advice," he said. "To seek my advice?" she asked in astonishment. "About what?" "The people have deserted me out of fear of Hajjaj or being tempted by what he has to offer. Even my children and my family have left me. There is only a small group of men with me now and however strong and steadfast they are they can only resist for an hour or two more. Messengers of the Banu Umayyah (the Umayyads) are now negotiating with me, offering to give me whatever worldly possessions I want, should I lay down my arms and swear allegiance to Abdul Malik ibn Marwan. What do you think?" Raising her voice, she replied: "It's your affair, Abdullah, and you know yourself better. If however you think you are right and that you are standing up for the Truth, then persevere and fight on as your companions who were killed under your flag had shown perseverance. If however you desire the world, what a miserable wretch you are. You would have destroyed yourself and you would have destroyed your men." "But I will be killed today; there is no doubt about it." "That is better for you than that you should surrender yourself to Hajjaj voluntarily and that some minions of Banu Umayyah should play with your head." "I do not fear death. I am only afraid that they will mutilate me." "There is nothing after death that man should be afraid of. Skinning does not cause any pain to the slaughtered sheep."

Abdullah's face beamed as he said: "What a blessed mother! Blessed be your noble qualities! I have come to you at this hour to hear what I have heard. God knows that I have not weakened or despaired. He is witness over me that I have not stood up for what I have out of love for this world and its attractions but only out of anger for the sake of God. His limits have been transgressed. Here am I, going to what is pleasing to you. So if I am killed, do not grieve for me and command me to God."

"I shall grieve for you," said the ageing but resolute Asmaa, "only if you are killed in a vain and unjust cause."

"Be assured that your son has not supported an unjust cause, nor committed any detestable deed, nor done any injustice to a Muslim or a Dhimmi and that there is nothing better in his sight than the pleasure of God, the Mighty, the Great. I do not say this to exonerate myself. God knows that I have only said it to make your heart firm and steadfast."

"Praise be to God who has made you act according to what He likes and according to what I like. Come close to me, my son, that I may smell and feel your body for this might be the last meeting with you." Abdullah knelt before her. She hugged him and smothered his head, his face and his neck with kisses. Her hands began to squeeze his body when suddenly she withdrew them and asked: "What is this you are wearing, Abdullah?"

"This is my armor plate."

"This, my son, is not the dress of one who desires martyrdom. Take it off. That will make your movements lighter and quicker. Wear instead the sirwal (a long under garment) so that if you are killed your 'awrah will not be exposed."

Abdullah took off his armor plate and put on the sirwal. As he left for the Haram to join the fighting he said: "My mother, don't deprive me of your du'a (prayer)."

Raising her hands to heaven, she prayed: "O Lord, have mercy on his staying up for long hours and his loud crying in the darkness of the night while people slept...." O Lord, have mercy on his hunger and his thirst on his journeys from Madinah and Mecca while he fasted...."O Lord, bless his righteousness to his mother and his father...."O Lord, I commend him to Your cause and I am pleased with whatever You decree for him. And grant me for his sake the reward of those who are patient and who persevere."

By sunset, Abdullah was dead. Just over ten days later, his mother joined him. She was a hundred years old. Age had not made her infirm nor blunted the keenness of her mind.



## ZIGNEE

(a delicious and extremely hot-spiced dish from Ethiopia)

### Ingredients:

- 1 chicken (cut in serving pieces)
- 1 large onion (diced)
- 3 tbls hot red pepper (chili powder)
- 2 tbls oil
- 4-5 tomatoes blended (enough to cover chicken in pot)
- 4 hard-boiled eggs (pierce eggs with sharp knife to make small hole)
- Salt to taste
- Little water

### Preparation:

1. Fry onions in oil very well until translucent.
2. Add red chili powder and a little water and fry some more.
3. Next add your chicken and continue frying until chicken becomes brown.
4. Add the blended tomatoes and lower heat to simmer.
5. Salt to taste and continue cooking till done.
6. When chicken is done, add the hard-boiled eggs to the pot and let the eggs absorb the red chili sauce.

Serve and enjoy an authentic Ethiopian dish!

## PROPHET HUd (PBUH)

### TO THE PEOPLE OF 'AD

Hud was the Prophet sent to the Bani 'Ad for their reformation. His lineage genealogy joins with the Prophet Nuh (peace be upon him) and his sons. Nuh had 3 sons who were saved from the flood-- Sam, Ham, and Yafith. The children of Sam were scattered in the Arabian Peninsula. Sam had a son named Iram. And one of Iram's sons was 'Ad. So they named the town after his son--the city was named 'Ad. The town of 'Ad was very dusty and located near Ahqaf, near Hadramout in Yemen.

Who were these people of 'Ad? They were the people that God sent to them the Prophet Hud. They lived near Hadramout, which is now in Yemen. There they built palaces, erected temples and worshipped deities and stars.

**"Seest thou not how Thy Lord dealt with the 'Ad (people), of the (city of) Iram, with lofty pillars, the like of which were not produced in (all) the land?" (Qur'an 89:6-8)**

The names of their chief deities were Saqi'ah, Salimah, Raziqah and Hafizun. This worshipping of statues came after a time when the people of 'Ad once believed in the one God.

**"(Remember also) the 'Ad and the Thamud (people): clearly will appear to you from (the traces) of their buildings (their fate) Satan made their deeds alluring to them, and kept them back from the Path, though they were Keen-sighted." (Qur'an 29:38)**

The people of 'Ad were tall in stature and were skillful masons. God had given them abundance of wealth, cattle, children and gardens. They had attained a considerable degree of civilization. Among them flourished the famous king Shaddad. He built a magnificent palace near 'Aden. It was known as the Garden of Iram. He was a mighty king and his conquests extended to Syria, Iraq and the frontier of Sub-continent of Indo-Pakistan.

These people were proud of their achievements and considered themselves to be invincible. They were indulged in sins and committed acts of injustice and violence. Instead of expressing a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty God for the favors He had bestowed upon them, they became transgressors and showed disobedience to Him.

God sent to these people and to the city of 'Ad a man named Hud. Since he was a man from amongst them, it was certain that they would be more inclined to listen to him. The people of 'Ad used to call Hud a crazy man. There was one man in particular, named Abu Thamud, who used to call the people to listen to Hud speak. He wanted to prove to the people that Hud had indeed become crazy.

The people asked Abu Thamud, "We know that Hud does not come to our gatherings nor does he believe in our gods. What has happened to him that he does not mingle with us?"

Abu Thamud replied (mocking) that Hud declares that God sent him as a prophet and as a warner to the people of 'Ad. And unless they stop believing in statues, that a grievous punishment from God would occur.

The people of the city then decided to go to Hud and hear what he wanted from them. Hud replied that he did not want anything from them except that they believe in the One God. The people of the



city refused to believe and began to say that Hud had indeed gone crazy. Since they were so strong in body size, they used to believe that no one was more powerful than they.

They insisted that they will not leave their gods. They also claimed that since Hud did not come with any signs, that he must be lying. Still another person said that if Hud wants them to leave their gods, then he must come with the punishment that he is talking about.

**“To the ‘Ad People (We sent) Hud, one of their own brethren. He said: “O my people! Worship God! Ye have no other god but Him. You are only forgers. “O my people! I ask of you no reward for this (Message). My reward is from none but Him who created me: Will ye not then understand? “And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord, and turn to Him (in repentance): He will send you skies pouring abundant rain, and add strength to your strength: So turn ye not back in sin!” They said: “O Hud! No clear (Sign) hast thou brought us, and we are not the ones to desert our gods on thy word! Nor shall we believe in thee! “We say nothing but that (perhaps) some of our gods may have seized thee with evil.” He said: “I call God to witness, and do ye bear witness, that I am free from the sin of ascribing to Him, “Other gods as partners!” (Qur'an 11:50-55)**

However, Abu Thamud began to slowly listen to what Hud was talking about. He began to believe in what Hud was saying about the one God and about how man would be resurrected after death. When the people of the city began to hear what Abu Thamud was saying, they claimed that Hud must have put a spell on him.

Abu Thamud insisted that Hud had put no spell on him but that he now believed that which Hud was saying. Abu Thamud further claimed that it is ridiculous to believe that statues that were made by man could have made the earth and all that it contained, along with the sky, stars, moon, and sun. He said that there surely had to be a higher being -One God.

Abu Thamud was now very happy and told the people that he was now going to look for Hud. Before he left, he reminded the people that they should take a close look at the way they were living and believing in statues. He stated that the statues have no power and were of no use.

He further stated that they should look at their lives and how wasteful they were with gambling, intoxicants, and luxuries. Abu Thamud then proceeded to find Hud so that Hud could tell him more about God, the One, who created man with bounties

and who will make man die and resurrect again.

He then went to Hud and declared his faith in the one God.

Abu Thamud was then called Abdullah (the servant of God). He would get angry if anyone would call him by his previous name. The people of ‘Ad still would come to Abdullah and try to convince him that Hud had put a spell on him. Each time Abdullah would declare his faith in the One God.

Finally the people gave up on Abdullah. They gave him a message to give to Hud. They wanted to relate to Hud that they would continue to believe in their gods. And that they would never believe in what Hud was preaching.

They also wanted Hud to come with the punishment he was talking about if what he said was true. Then the people of ‘Ad returned to their homes laughing and mocking.

Abdullah went to Hud to relate to him what had happened. Hud said woe to them. Will they argue about the deities that they and their forefathers made with their own hands? Let them just wait. They deserve the punishment of God. He then stood up and prayed: “Give me victory on what they called me a liar.”

Then the order of God came - The punishment of no more rain. There was a terrible drought for three years. The grass and cattle were destroyed. Then a huge black cloud appeared.

The people of ‘Ad were very happy when they saw this cloud because they assumed that it contained much rain. They declared that this cloud would bring back the land and the rivers would flow again.

Little did they know what was in store for them. Instead, this black cloud brought a terrible wind that would lift men up and then drop them with such force that they would crush.

Many men even tried to escape this wind by hiding in the mountain caves. However, there was no escape from this wind. This wind would even follow them in the caves.

The Holy Qur'an describes:

**“And the ‘Ad, they were destroyed by a furious Wind, exceedingly violent: He made it rage against them seven nights and eight days in succession: so that you couldst see the (whole) people lying overthrown in its (path) as if they had been roots of hollow palm-trees tumbled down!” (Qur'an 69:6-7)**

The people of ‘Ad used to boast that there was none stronger than they. God surely proved them wrong for their disobedience. God destroyed not only the people of ‘Ad, but the entire city as well.

**“Now the ‘Ad behaved arrogantly through the land, against (all) reason, and said: “Who is superior to us in strength?” What! Did they not see that God, Who created them, was superior to them in strength? But they continued to reject Our Signs!” (Qur'an 41:15)**

Hud and his faithful followers who had left to another place, were the only ones who survived this terrible punishment from God.

**“We saved him and those who adhered to him, by Our Mercy and We cut off the roots of those who rejected Our Signs and did not believe.” (Qur'an 7:72)**

Afterwards the remnant who survived established themselves in Yemen. The grave of the Prophet Hud (AS) is in Hadramaut. It is visited by the Muslims in the month of Rajab.

## TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHET

### MISCELLANEOUS HADITH

On the authority of Abu Huraira (R.A.A.) who said: The Prophet (PBUH), said: **"Look upon one who is below you in status. In this way you will not look down upon the grace of that God bestowed upon you."** (Bukhari and Muslim)

Note: The messages of this Hadith are:

1. Count your Blessings.
2. Compare yourself with people who have less than you, rather than those who have more. This is the best way to be happy, and to appreciate what God has done for you.

On the authority of Abu Abbas Sahl Bin Sa'ad Al-Sa'idi (R.A.A.) who said: 'A man came to the Prophet (PBUH) and requested him: "Messenger of God (PBUH), tell me something by which I could win the love of The Almighty and the people." The Prophet told him, **"Do not love the world, and The Almighty will love you; and do not have a longing for that which people have, and they will love you."**" (Ibn-Majah)

Note: Do not love the world means: Do not love the materials in this world. Don't be anxious to have money, properties, fame, leadership, etc. Just live a simple life and God will love you.

On the authority of An-Nu'man bin Bashir (R.A.A.) who said: The messenger of God (PBUH) said: **"The lawful is clear and the unlawful is clear, and between them are doubtful things, which are not known to most of the people. He who keeps away from the doubtful things protects his faith and honor; and he who indulges in doubtful acts, commits unlawful deeds."** (Bukhari and Muslim)

Note: The main point of this hadith is "to stay on the safe side" because many times you will not know about certain things and will not be quite sure if they are right or wrong.

On the authority of Ibn 'Umar (R.A.A.) who said: The Messenger of God (PBUH) caught my shoulder and said: **"Be in the world as if you are a stranger or a traveler."** (Bukhari)

Note: The message of this Hadith is that life is a temporary state because we live for a few years and then we die. We should consider ourselves as strangers passing through and should not worry about acquiring material possessions and luxury.

On the authority of Anas Bin Malik (R.A.A.) who said: The Messenger of God (PBUH), said: **"Three things follow a dead person: members, his belongings, and his deeds- The first two come back and the third remains with him."** (Bukhari and Muslim)

Note: This Hadith explains that the three things that follow a person's funeral -- family members and deeds -- only a person's deeds will be able to help him in the next life. Good deeds will stay with him and be beneficial.

### SOURCES/PUBLISHERS

Listed below are some of the major publishers and distributors for Islamic publications, including the Holy Qu'ran. Contact them for their free catalogues.

American Trust Publications / Islamic Book Service  
10900 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, IN 46231  
PH: (317) 839-9248 FAX: (317) 839-2511 (Excellent!!)

Amana Corporation  
4411 41st St., Brentwood, MD 20722  
(Our'an by Yusuf Ali in English and also Qur'an in French)  
*The Islamic Bulletin*

PH: (301) 779-7777 FAX: (301) 779-0570

Al Huda Publishers  
2510 Electronic Lane Suite 907, Dallas, Texas 75220  
PH: (214) 902-0297 FAX: (214) 902-0051

Al'Furqan Academy  
P.O. Box 1546, Norcross, GA 30091  
PH: (404) 840-7900 FAX: (404) 840-0132

HBS  
P.O. Box 160625 Cupertino, CA 95016  
(Mail order only)  
PH: (408) 746-0770

Ingram Press  
P.O. Box 1451 Cedar Rapids, IA 52404  
(To order the Gospel of Barnabas - limited Islamic selection)  
PH: (319) 393-3934

Islamic Information Foundation  
8 Laurel Lane Halifax, N.S. Canada B3M2P6  
(Excellent source for cassette tapes)  
PH: (902) 445-2494 FAX: (902) 445-2494

Islamic Foundation  
(Excellent source for variety of topics)  
Publications Unit, Unit 9,  
The Old Dunlop Factory, 62 Evington Valley Rd.  
Leicester, LE5 5LJ, United Kingdom  
PH: (533) 734860 FAX: (530) 244946

Kazi Publications  
3023 W. Belmont Ave. Chicago, IL 60618  
(Good selection of Islamic material)  
PH: (312) 267-7001 FAX: (312) 267-7002

Muslim World League  
P.O. Box 537 Mecca, Saudi Arabia  
(Free Islamic literature)  
PH: (02) 5425016 FAX: (02) 5425016

New Era Publications  
P.O. Box 8139 Ann Arbor, MI 48107  
PH: (313) 663-1929

Saudi Consulate - Islamic Department  
601 N. Hampshire Ave. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20037  
PH: (202) 342-5686 FAX: (202) 944-5982  
(Free Islamic literature)

Sound Vision  
843 W. Van Buren Suite 411 Chicago, IL 60607  
PH: (800) 432-4262  
(Major supplier of children's materials)

World Assembly Of Muslim Youth (WAMY)  
P.O. Box 10845, Riyadh 11443 Saudi Arabia  
(Free Islamic material in many languages)  
PH: (01) 4641663 TLX:200413 ISLAMI SJ

First and most importantly, Dr. Speight has tried his very best to remove some misunderstandings about Islam by helping Christians to overcome the tendency of stereotyping the Muslims. He outlines the worldwide distribution of Muslim population, identifying the predominantly Muslim countries, as well as those where they are in minority, thereby pointing out their geo-political importance.

Dr. Speight discusses beliefs and worship of the Muslims, rightly emphasizing the highest esteem and the exalted place to which the Holy Quran and Hadith are held by the Muslims. He briefly discusses how the Holy Quran repeatedly makes mention of the prophets of the Jews and Christians, and other stories and incidents, also reported in the Bible.

Dr. Speight briefly touches upon moral values, social justice, human rights as well as practice of politics and economics as emphasized in Islam. Family life, marriage, divorce and position of women in Islam are discussed and also similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity, with a recommendation to be open-minded and understanding.

Dr. Speight is forthright in giving credit to Muslims contributions in the advancement of modern science, mathematics, medicine, philosophy, culture and civilization, etc., which got Europe out of the "dark age".

Though he notes only a few examples and very briefly, yet he has belied the popular and favorite theme of the news media of today, which paints the Arabs, nay all Muslims, as uncivilized, uneducated and barbarous terrorists. Two prayers of Hazrat Ali Zainul Abidine (pbuh) are also included herein.

However, some of his assertions need clarification and comment. For example, on Page 42, Dr. Speight mentions that Abraham (pbuh) "repudiated" Hagar.

This is actually the Biblical version, which differs from the Holy Quran and Hadith. The Holy Quran reports Abraham saying, "**O our Lord! I have made some of my offspring to dwell in a valley without cultivation, by Thy Sacred House...**" (Quran 14:37)

This arrangement of keeping his two wives at separate places was to keep peace in the family.

On page 45, Dr. Speight writes, "The Quran does not give the name of the son who was offered" in sacrifice, but the Hadith refers to Ismail (pbuh) as the son who was sacrificed by Abraham (pbuh), whereas the Bible refers to Isaac as that son.

In addition, on Page 68, Dr. Speight in his discussion of the Shi'a sect, he offers the opinion that the Shi'a maintain that Muhammad "really did prefer his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, and that this preference was suppressed by the leaders who had another opinion on succession." They believe that Ali's selection as Muhammad's successor was divinely ordained and not strictly dependent upon the will of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).

However, Dr. Speight does go on to point out that "...it is safe to say that the elements of unity [previously discussed] ...hold Sunni and Shi'a together more strongly than their divergences keep them apart."

"God is One" is an introductory descriptive neat little book written in simple and easy to understand language. It is nevertheless, very informative not only for non-Muslims but also for Muslims who are not knowledgeable about contributions of early Muslims to modern civilization.

This book may help fill the gap, at least a little, in removing a misunderstanding about Islam. He has rightly mentioned that misunderstanding about Islam is due to environment. No doubt this book is written for the Christian laity to adapt their approach and behaviors toward understanding Islam for the propagation of Christianity.

However, on balance, "God is One" is a positive contribution to the better understanding of Islam.

## HOLIDAYS



The following holidays are observed among Muslim communities throughout the world:

**'Eid al-Fitr** - also known as the Little Feast, marks the end of the great fast of Ramadan. It is on the first day of Shawwal.

**'Eid al-Adha** - Feast of Sacrifice, also known as the Great Feast, 70 days after Eid al-Fitr, on the 10th of Dhu al-Hijjah.

**Ra's al-Sannah** - New Year's Festival, falls on the first of the month of Muharram.

**Mawlid an-Nabi** - the Prophet's Birthday, is celebrated on the 12th day of the month of Rabi' al-Awwal.

**Eid Mubarak!! Happy Eid!!**